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## Bird, Bat and Butterfly Conservation Steps Honored



On March 27 Joel Holtrop, Deputy Chief, National Forest Systems presided over the [Wings Across the Americas Awards Ceremony](#) to honor outstanding achievements in conservation of birds bats and butterflies. Awards went to Forest Service employees and their partners, including conservation organizations, universities, volunteer foundations, and private sector firms.

This annual event celebrates exceptional work that conserves birds, bats and butterflies and their habitats across the Americas. It recognizes the important roles that these species play in the

environment as well as their value to human society.

Birds are increasingly understood as providing important ecological, recreational, social, cultural and economic benefits throughout the Americas. Unfortunately, bird species across the U.S. and the entire hemisphere are declining. Of the over 700 species that live in the U.S. at least part of the year, more than half are declining and over 200 are now at risk for becoming endangered—mostly due to habitat loss.

Bats have significant ecological roles as pollinators, seed dispersers and insect predators. Most North American bats consume large number of crop pests, contributing significantly to healthy forests and agricultural crops. Bat populations are declining globally, mostly due to habitat destruction. **(right: Paul B. Hamel, Center for Bottomland Hardwoods Research, accepts the 2008 Wings Across the Americas award for INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. [Click to enlarge.](#))**



The [migration of the monarch butterfly](#) is one of the most spectacular and unusual of the world's natural events. Habitat loss poses a threat to the monarch throughout its breeding, migration and wintering range.

Partnerships are an effective conservation tool when activities take place across different land ownerships, and across domestic and international boundaries. The Forest Service has been fostering such partnerships for many years, by funding, by applying the expertise and hard work of the agency's personnel, and by providing a forum for participation by local

citizens, governments, and organizations.

The 2008 Awards ceremony, held at the 73rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, brought partners together to recognize their outstanding achievements. There were five award winners for the five categories included:

- The BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION AWARD was awarded to the Monarch Butterfly Research Project. Location: Hiawatha National Forest, Rapid River/Manistique Range District, Delta County, Mich.
- The BAT CONSERVATION AWARD was awarded to the Ecology and Conservation Center for Forest Bats. Location: Southern Research Station, Sumter National Forest (S.C.), Chattahoochee National Forest (Ga.), Daniel Boone National Forest (Ky.), Nantahala National Forest (N.C.), DOE-Savannah River Site (S.C.), Congaree National Park (S.C.), Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Tenn.), 9 additional National Park units (N.C., S.C., Ga.) in the Southeastern U.S.
- The RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP AWARD went to Mapping Landbirds across Bird Conservation Regions: Decision Support for Joint Ventures. Location: The Central Hardwoods and West Gulf Coastal Plain Bird Conservation Regions under the planning auspices of two Joint Ventures, the Central Hardwoods and Lower Mississippi Valley, and six National Forests: Mark Twain, Hoosier, Shawnee, Ozark, Ouachita, and Land Between The Lakes.
- The HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP AWARD was awarded to the Big River Prescribed Burn Partnership. Location: Chippewa National Forest, Walker Ranger District, Leech Lake Indian Reservation, Cass County, Minnesota, Upper Mississippi Headwaters Joint Venture Region, and Bird Conservation Region 12.
- The INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AWARD went to the Cerulean Warbler Nonbreeding Habitat Assessment, El Grupo Cerúleo, Subcommittee of The Cerulean Warbler Technical Group, Chaired by Paul Hamel, Southern Research Station. Location: Northern Andes of South America, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

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